

Dear Planning Participant,

Thank you for your interest in the Forestwide Improvement Project. This is an update for this project.

The Purpose of this project is to improve the overall health of forested stands on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests. Overstocked stands (ranging from over 300 to 5000+ stems per acre) of non-commercial sized trees, generally with a diameter of less than 7 inches at breast height (dbh), would be thinned, slashed, shrub slashed, pruned, weeded, girdled, cleaned, and released, by hand using chainsaws and/or handsaws. While the best quality trees of many species would be retained, the project would favor retention of western white pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine, which are more resistant to insects, fire, root disease, and stem decay than other conifer species on the forest.

In the past, many projects with the same type of activities have been proposed and successfully accomplished. Historically during planning, we received similar comments numerous times outlining concerns. While developing this project, the Forest fully considered past comments and, in many ways, designed this project based on those comments. Some of those designs include:

- Non-commercial sized trees, generally with a diameter of less than 7 inches at breast height (dbh), would be thinned, slashed, shrub slashed, pruned, weeded, girdled, cleaned, and released, **by hand** using chainsaws and/or handsaws.
- Treatments would not occur in Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas (RHCA), Research Natural Areas (RNA), National Historic Trail corridors (Lewis and Clark NHT, Nez Perce/Nee-Me-Poo NHT), Lolo Motorway, Wilderness Areas, Idaho Roadless Areas, Wild and Scenic River corridors, modeled lynx habitat, old growth, or where thinning treatments are not authorized by law, regulation, or Forest Plan direction.
- Within the treated units, tree spacing, residual tree density, and tree species to be retained (favoring western white pine, western larch, and ponderosa pine) would be determined by site conditions and documented in the silvicultural prescription.
- Only existing roads, including those closed to public use but available for administrative use, would be used to access the treatment sites. Access would be either by truck, ATV/UTV, and/or by foot. No new or temporary roads would be constructed.
- Treatments would be completed either by Forest Service personnel or by contract crews under the oversight of Forest Service personnel.
- Stands requiring any additional resource specialist analysis beyond the scope of this project would be included in a separate NEPA analysis and decision

Full information regarding the design of this project can be found on the project webpage:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=58299>,

The decision for this project is now pending and the Responsible Official plans to sign in approximately two weeks.

Thank you for your continued interest in the management of the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.